

MUSIC ON SEA NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

Welcome to the Music on Sea (MOS) February newsletter! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out via musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will find:

- An Update from Kitt Garner
- Key Updates
- Projects and Performance Opportunities
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- Greater Essex Music Hub (GEMH) Update
- Key Contacts

An Update from Kitt Garner

As we move through the spring term, it has been encouraging to receive such positive reports from our tutors about the high levels of musical progression happening across Southend schools. Students continue to make strong efforts, and we are grateful for the support schools provide in ensuring lessons run smoothly and that music remains such an important part of pupils' weekly experience.

This month also saw the successful return of Southend Makes Music, held from 9th–12th February at the Palace Theatre. We're delighted that schools have already shared their positive feedback about their students' experiences and the impressive standard of performances across all four evenings. Alongside this, preparations are well underway for our summer term events, including our new annual rock gig. More information and invitations will follow shortly, and you can read further details about Southend Makes Music in the dedicated section below.

With the welcome change in the weather this week, it really feels like we're turning a corner into a brighter part of the year. We're looking forward to a lively and creative spring and summer, filled with opportunities for young musicians across Southend to perform, collaborate, and continue developing their musical skills.

Kitt Garner, Lead Officer for the Music Service



Key Updates

Service Level Agreements for In-School Tuition

Delivery commitment is via the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between MOS and the school. You will have already or will soon be receiving your SLA for the spring term, and here is a reminder of the process that we follow:

1. Book: Schools contact musiconsea@southend.gov.uk emailing the details of new pupils or classes required.
2. Check: Tutors confirms all hours that they will take on - directly with the school.
3. Confirm: SLAs issued to the school. Schools confirm with MOS that this is correct and share details of any pupils who receive financial assistance.
4. Invoice: Invoice sent to the school for the term, as laid out in the SLA.

The MOS 25/26 booklet lays out the provision on offer. Music leads are to familiarise with [booking terms and conditions](#).

Financial Assistance

MOS offers financial support to ensure every child and young person can access music opportunities. Families on low incomes, pupils receiving Free School Meals, Looked After Children, and young carers qualify for assistance, as laid out below:

- Instruments: Hire instruments for eligible families at half price (£15) and Looked After Children at no charge. Discounts can be requested via the instrument hire form.
- Ensembles: Free membership for pupils on Free School Meals, young carers, and Southend Advantage Card Category C holders. New members can enjoy a free trial session. Apply through the ensemble membership form.
- HMRC's Assisted Instrument Purchase scheme (AIPs): Save VAT on instrument purchases for pupils in full-time education who are eligible, such as receiving lessons or being part of an ensemble. Approval must be granted via the application process before purchase.
- Tuition: Children Looked After or Previously Looked After can access free in-school lessons through MOS tutors. Families should apply via their school.

For full details and application forms, [visit the financial assistance page on our website](#).

Whole Class Ensemble Tuition (WCET)

As WCET continues to play a vital role in broadening access to high-quality music education, investing in the ongoing development of our peri tutor team is essential. The collaborative atmosphere underlined the strong sense of commitment to delivering consistent, inclusive, and inspiring musical experiences for every child.

We are excited to see this learning put into practice across Southend on Sea schools over the coming terms. By equipping tutors with the tools, confidence, and support they need, MOS is continuing to expand the impact of whole class teaching across the city - ensuring more children have the opportunity to make music together, discover new talents, and build lasting musical foundations.

Please [complete this form to book your sessions](#) for WCET in summer 25/26 and direct any questions to musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.



Project and Performance Opportunities

Amplify (Previously *Rock Fest*)

We're excited to announce that MOS will be running our annual concert for bands in Southend schools this summer term. This event is always a highlight of the year, giving young rock and pop musicians the chance to perform on a professional stage and celebrate more of the incredible talent across our schools.

Schools will receive formal invitations and full event information soon, so please keep an eye on upcoming newsletters and your inbox. We look forward to welcoming your students and showcasing the fantastic work happening in music across Southend. If you have any questions in the meantime, direct any questions to musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

Sharing Successes

Southend Makes Music

[Take a look at our press release!](#)

Southend Makes Music once again united the city in a lively celebration of young musicians, as more than 700 children from 22 schools and community groups performed at the Palace Theatre from 9–12 February. Delivered by Music on Sea, the event showcased an impressive range of choirs, bands, soloists and orchestras, with every performer demonstrating energy, creativity and a strong passion for music.

Kitt Garner, Lead Officer for Music on Sea: "I'm incredibly proud of all our performers. One of our key ambitions is to connect what happens in the classroom with real opportunities for musical progression — and giving young people the chance to perform in a professional venue is a vital part of that journey. Music changes lives. It boosts confidence, builds creativity, and opens doors to opportunities that children and young people never forget. What we've seen throughout this week is the joy that music making can bring. The success of this year's celebration is a testament to the dedication of teachers, tutors from Music on Sea, school leaders, staff, and families who champion musical opportunities for young people across Southend."

Rosemary Pennington, Head of Arts and Cultural Wellbeing at Southend-on-Sea City Council said: "What a delight it was to have been at Southend Makes Music at the Palace Theatre on Wednesday night. The whole evening was full of talented children and young people performing a wonderful mixture and range of music across all ages. From the very youngest infant school choir to the secondary school performing arts and singing students, this was a night to remember. Southend is a hugely musical City, and our children and young people demonstrated that this week through Southend Makes Music."

Thank you to all children, school staff, tutors and families for their hard work and support to make this such a success.

MOS Strengthens Tutor WCET Delivery

This January, our MOS tutors came together for a focused evening of CPD centred around whole class ensemble tuition (WCET). The session provided an opportunity for tutors to explore effective approaches to group musicianship, share best practice, and reflect on strategies that engage and inspire entire classes of young learners.



Safeguarding

A Letter of Assurance to cover MOS staff and tutors is issued to all schools and educational settings (compliance with safer recruitment, vetting, and statutory safeguarding checks). The letter can be found here: [Education | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#)

Our full safeguarding procedures are detailed in the Greater Essex Music Hub Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, which outlines our responsibilities, reporting processes, and the measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child we work with. The policy can be accessed here: [Greater Essex Music Hub Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy](#).

Safeguarding Contacts

DBS Update Service: 0300 020 0190 / customerservices@db.gov.uk

MASH+ Children's Social Care, Southend-on-Sea City Council: 01702 215007 or 0345 606 1212 (out of hours for urgent referrals) / fct@southend.gov.uk

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): lado@southend.gov.uk

Safeguarding Advisor: Sharon Langston 01702 534591 / safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk

Greater Essex Music Hub (GEMH) Update

This can be found here: [Home - Greater Essex Music Hub](#)

Key Contacts

Your first point of contact is Ted Groves at musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

Who Do I Contact If I Have a Question?

I have a safeguarding concern/disclosure	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I'd like to request music provision	Ted Groves	musiconsea@southend.gov.uk
I have a challenge with a tutor	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I have a challenge with a provider/partner	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I'd like to discuss a sensitive matter	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I have a query about an SLA/agreement	Ted Groves	musiconsea@southend.gov.uk

Music on Sea team

Kitt Garner	Music Service Lead Officer & Designated Safeguarding Lead
Edward (Ted) Groves	Music Service Support Officer
Julie Hollingsworth	Senior Advisor and Manager for the Service
Amanda Champ	Head of Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding

